

GREAT EXPECTATIONS: THE U.S. ARMY X CORPS IN KOREA, SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 1950

A Monograph

by

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ABSTRACT

GREAT EXPECTATIONS: THE U.S. ARMY X CORPS IN KOREA, SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 1950, by Major Caleb Hyatt, United States Marine Corps, 58 pages.

The U.S. Army X Corps as an organization presents a rich case study in large unit operations. It fought under General Douglas A. MacArthur's direct command in 1950 as one of two independent major subordinate commands, leading joint and multinational forces without the supervision of an intermediate army headquarters. In less than four weeks, MacArthur transformed a small planning team into an operational corps headquarters responsible for the successful amphibious assault at Inchon and the liberation of Seoul. However, just two months later, the combat-hardened corps narrowly escaped complete destruction by twelve Chinese Communist divisions as it withdrew from the Chosin Reservoir in northeast Korea.

This monograph examines the corps' organizational structure, operations process, and command environment using contemporary doctrine to discern the factors that affected its ability to expand the Inchon beachhead to secure Seoul, prepare for offensive actions in northeast Korea, and attack north to the Yalu River. Ultimately, no single consideration fully explains the corps' fate in late 1950. Instead, this monograph finds that the X Corps lacked sufficient time to build cohesive teams before commencing operations in Korea, neglected to consistently plan ahead, provide administrative support, or coordinate the actions of its assigned units, and proved unable to engender a command environment that fostered teamwork. Together, these factors largely affected the corps between its success at Inchon and the withdrawal from the Chosin Reservoir.

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INTRODUCTION

At 2200 on 26 November 1950, Lieutenant Colonel Harold S. Roise, Commanding Officer of the 2d Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, assembled his company commanders in a blackout tent at battalion headquarters in Yudam-ni, just a few thousand yards west of the Chosin Reservoir in northeast Korea in a broad valley surrounded by five immense ridges. The temperature had plummeted to zero degrees Fahrenheit at nightfall, and the north wind battered the Marines positioned on the valley and hillsides around Yudam-ni. Inside the flapping tent walls, Roise issued his orders for the next morning's attack scheduled to begin at 0800. His battalion, part of the 1st Marine Division and temporarily assigned to the U.S. Army X Corps for operations in Korea, would advance along a winding, narrow road through near-vertical cliff faces to his objective, a key pass ten miles west of Yudam-ni, while the 7th Marine Regiment supported his attack from positions along the dominating high ground.¹

The Marines commenced their attack on 27 November as planned, with the first several companies from the 7th Marines securing their objectives on the high ground with no enemy interference. Little more than an hour later, around 0930, and less than 1,500 yards from where it started, Company F, spearheading the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines advance, received long-range small arms fire from enemy forces on its objective at Hill 1403. Around the same time, a spotter plane reported masses of parka-clad Chinese troops swarming the route of attack. Company F ascended the slopes of Hill 1403 as planned and positioned mortar and recoilless rifle teams to support the battalion's continued advance along the road. At 1015, the mortars and recoilless rifles, along with 105mm howitzers from the 1st Battalion, 11th Marines, pounded the visible Chinese positions on the adjacent slopes, followed closely by rocket and bomb runs from Marine

¹Lynn Montross and Nicholas A. Canzona, *U.S. Marine Operations in Korea, 1950-1953, Volume III: The Chosin Reservoir Campaign* (Washington, DC: Historical Branch, G-3, Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps, 1957), 151-157.

aircraft. The battalion continued its advance a few hundred yards around the road bend and quickly encountered tiers of Chinese entrenchments on the steep slopes east of the road and withering frontal fire that raked its formation and halted its movement almost immediately. Roise, faced with a fortified enemy, treacherous terrain, and mounting casualties, discontinued the attack and began to regroup and establish defensive positions in preparation for the looming Chinese counterattack. The 2d Battalion, 5th Marines had just commenced a fight for its very survival.²

Later that day, after meeting with General Douglas A. MacArthur, Commanding General of the Far East Command, Major General Edward M. “Ned” Almond, Commanding General of the X Corps, issued Operations Order 8 discontinuing further Corps offensive advances and directing its fighting withdrawal and evacuation through the port of Hungnam. This would be no easy feat as the X Corps fought to avoid additional isolation, encirclement, and destruction by three Chinese armies compromising twelve total divisions.³ MacArthur curtly summarized the situation to the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 28 November: “We face an entirely new war.”⁴ Indeed, the same corps that executed a brilliant amphibious assault at Inchon and liberated Seoul just two months prior now teetered on the brink of disaster.

At the time of Roise’s attack, the Taebek mountain range in northern Korea separated Lieutenant General Walton Walker’s Eighth Army and Almond’s X Corps by almost fifty air miles of trackless, impassible, snow-covered peaks in excess of 7,000 feet. Except in the timing of their operations, these two units constituted tactically independent fronts that MacArthur coordinated from his Far East Command headquarters in Tokyo. In addition to the broad lateral terrain gap, the X Corps front extended far beyond the Eighth Army’s forward positions. In fact,

²Ibid.

³Clay Blair, *The Forgotten War: America in Korea, 1950-1953* (New York: Anchor Books, 1989), 470, 508.

⁴Billy C. Mossman, *Ebb and Flow: November 1950-July 1951* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1988), 84.

Walker's forward most positions barely reached Almond's rear areas.⁵ The X Corps area of operations encompassed over one hundred thousand soldiers, Marines, and sailors from three reinforced U.S. divisions, an American special operations company, a British commando company, and several Republic of Korea forces including one corps, two additional divisions, and the marine regiment. These forces occupied positions spanning hundreds of miles from Wonsan, Hungnam, and Yonghong on the east coast, inland to the Chosin Reservoir and surrounding areas, and deep into the northeastern Korean peninsula near Samsu on the Yalu River.⁶

Over five months earlier, in late June, seven North Korean People's Army divisions invaded the Republic of Korea and captured its capital of Seoul.⁷ The South Korean Army rapidly disintegrated under North Korean People's Army pressure despite the concerted efforts of American military personnel assigned to the Korean Military Advisory Group. MacArthur quickly dispatched munitions ships and fighter aircraft to mitigate the escalating crisis. At the same time, Almond, then serving as the Far East Command Chief of Staff, orchestrated an emergency response force, the famous Task Force Smith, from the U.S. Eighth Army stationed in Japan.⁸ Undeterred, waves of North Koreans thoroughly routed the American units, including the

⁵Roy E. Appleman, *Disaster in Korea: The Chinese Confront MacArthur* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1989), 27-29.

⁶Mossman, *Ebb and Flow*, 84-90.

⁷Allan Reed Millett, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951: They Came From the North* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2010), 85.

⁸Task Force Smith, named after its commander, Lieutenant Colonel Charles B. Smith, consisted of half of Smith's 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, of the 24th Infantry Division, and an artillery battery. Task Force Smith fought the first American battle in Korea at Osan in early July 1950, delaying the advancing North Koreans for two weeks and ultimately withdrawing with the loss of Taejon and heavy casualties. Roy K. Flint, "Task Force Smith and the 24th Division: Delay and Withdrawal, 5-19 July 1950," in *America's First Battles, 1776-1965*, ed. Charles E. Heller and William A. Stofft (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1986), 266.

24th Infantry Division, throughout July and August 1950, ultimately forcing them back across the Nakdong River and into the Pusan perimeter in a small corner of southeastern Korea.⁹

On 4 July at the Far East Command headquarters, MacArthur and Almond discussed using the 1st Cavalry Division to conduct an amphibious landing in the enemy's rear in order to relieve pressure on the Pusan perimeter, enable an Eighth Army breakout, and liberate Seoul. They selected Marine Colonel Edward H. Forney to work with the 1st Cavalry Division on plans for the envelopment. Operation BLUEHEARTS, as it was called, originally envisioned a 22 July execution, but North Korea's continued southward offensive forced planners to abandon the original plan. However, the "Joint Strategic Plans and Operations Group," as Forney's team was called, continued planning.¹⁰ On 23 July, Brigadier General Edwin K. Wright, the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, Far East Command, proposed a landing at Inchon on the west coast with a simultaneous Eighth Army counter attack out of the Nakdong Perimeter. Agreeing, MacArthur approved Far East Command Operation Plan 100-B on 12 August 1950, renamed it Operation CHROMITE, and selected the Inchon-Seoul area as the target for the invasion.¹¹

As noted by Major General Oliver P. Smith, the Commanding General of the 1st Marine Division, the amphibious assault at Inchon on 15 September "had gone about as planned."¹² The 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines landed on Wolmi Do island early in the morning to prepare for the main assault later that afternoon. By noon, they controlled the island and had killed or captured approximately 400 North Korean defenders. Five hours later, under air and naval gunfire support,

⁹Millett, *They Came from the North*, 222-230.

¹⁰General MacArthur established the Joint Strategic Plans and Operations Group in August 1949. It served as the principal planning agency for the U.N. Command in the Korean War and included Army, Navy, and Air Force representatives. For more information, see Roy E. Appleman, *South to the Nakdong, North to the Yalu* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1992), 51.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 488-489.

¹²Robert D. Heinl, *Victory at High Tide: The Inchon-Seoul Campaign*, 3rd ed. (Annapolis, MD: Nautical & Aviation Pub. Co. of America, 1979), 120.

the main assault forces stormed ashore. By late that evening, the Fifth and First Marines achieved their objectives. Against moderate North Korean People's Army resistance, the chaos and confusion of the landings, and several unfortunate fratricide incidents, the X Corps concluded D-Day postured to expand the beachhead and advance on Seoul. The enemy defenders proved incapable of launching a counterattack and withdrew to blocking positions on the Han River and in Seoul.¹³ The American and North Korean forces would battle in the coming days and weeks as the Far East Command sought to link up with Eighth Army and liberate South Korea.

The X Corps as an organization presents a rich case study in large unit operations. It fought under MacArthur's direct command in 1950 as one of two independent major subordinate commands, the other Walker's Eighth Army. As a separate organization, the X Corps directed joint and multinational forces in offensive and defensive operations without the supervision of an intermediate army headquarters. Originally the planning team for Operation CHROMITE, in less than four weeks, MacArthur transformed this core nucleus of planners into an operational corps headquarters responsible for the invasion and the establishment of the Inchon beachhead.¹⁴ This task alone would challenge even the most experienced and cohesive corps headquarters and undoubtedly represented a palpable historical triumph for Almond and his fledgling organization. More poignantly, Inchon marked the beginning of a dynamic operational period on the Korean peninsula. Indeed, the Corps' actions in the ensuing months would span the spectrum of operations, test the limits and endurance of American military personnel and coalition partners, and underscore the advantages, challenges, and timeless lessons of large unit operations. It is appropriate to ask, therefore, what factors affected the X Corps' ability to conduct operations in Korea between the success at Inchon and the withdrawal from the Chosin Reservoir?

¹³Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 271-273.

¹⁴Richard W. Stewart, *Staff Operations: The X Corps in Korea, December 1950* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 1991), 1.

The U.S. Army's doctrine on the eve of the Korean War effectively remained that of World War II.¹⁵ It described an offensive approach to war using a dominant infantry, supported by the fire superiority of combined arms, to outmaneuver or physically annihilate the enemy.¹⁶ *FM 100-15, Field Service Regulations, Larger Units*, discussed the functions and operations of corps, armies, and army groups based on the overarching operations provisions established in *FM 100-5, Field Service Regulations, Operations*.¹⁷ *FM 100-15* established a common lexicon of terminology, described campaign planning at various echelons of command, and articulated the roles and functions of corps, armies, and army groups in the advance, offense, and defense.¹⁸ Along with *FM 100-15, Special Text No. 12, Command and Staff Functions*, influenced large unit operations in the Korean War. It described command and staff organizations, explained the functions of the staff officer at the various staff levels, and specifically addressed staff and intelligence coordination. *Special Text No. 12* explicitly sought to train intelligence officers on staff procedures up to and including the division level to make them more effective at their intelligence mission.¹⁹ However, the document proved equally accessible and relevant to corps,

¹⁵The concept of military "doctrine" has been present in military victories throughout history even though the term only first officially appeared in 1950. Its definition and application have changed over the centuries, alternately describing "a common way of objectively approaching and handling a subject; the 'logic' of professional behavior; a common philosophy, language or purpose; as 'codified common sense;' and, on occasion, even as the opinion of the senior officer present." Thus, doctrine can be a descriptive teaching tool or a prescriptive guide depending on who applies it and in what context. This monograph views it as a descriptive, common philosophy for objectively approaching military operations. Jay Luvaas, "Some Vagrant Thoughts on Doctrine," *Military Review* 66, no. 3 (March 1986): 56, 60.

¹⁶Walter E. Kretchik, *U.S. Army Doctrine From the American Revolution to the War on Terror* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2011), 161-164; Robert A. Doughty, *The Evolution of US Army Tactical Doctrine, 1946-76*, Leavenworth Papers (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1979), 6.

¹⁷United States War Department, *FM 100-15, Field Service Regulations, Larger Units* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1942); United States War Department, *FM 100-5, Field Service Regulations, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1941).

¹⁸United States War Department, *FM 100-15*, II-III.

¹⁹United States Army, *Special Text No. 12, Command and Staff Functions* (Fort Riley, KS: The Army General School, 1948), 1.

army, and army group headquarters. Finally, *FM 100-10, Field Service Regulations, Administration*, discussed all phases of military operations in the field not included in tactics and strategy and complemented the doctrine espoused in *FM 100-5* and *FM 100-15*.²⁰

Although sometimes referred to as the “forgotten war,” a multitude of published works discuss Korean War policy, strategy, and the detailed actions of specific military units and their personnel. The U.S. Army Center for Military History’s series on the Korean War offers a broad history of the Korean conflict that contributes greatly to understanding America’s rationale and objectives for Korean intervention.²¹ T.R. Fehrenbach’s *This Kind of War: A Study in Unpreparedness*, explores the factors that led the United States into the Korean War and affected its performance in combat.²² Robert D. Heintz’s *Victory at High Tide: The Inchon-Seoul Campaign*, provides a thorough account of the planning and execution of Operation CHROMITE, concluding with the successful actions to secure Seoul.²³ Edwin Hoyt’s *On to the Yalu* details the Inchon-Seoul campaign and subsequent offensive operations in northeast Korea.²⁴ Clay Blair’s *The Forgotten War* also contributes substantially to the body of knowledge on Korean War policy and strategy, presenting a close study of the war’s first year with a particular focus on United States Army infantry operations.²⁵ Shelby Stanton’s *America’s Tenth Legion: X Corps in Korea*,

²⁰United States War Department, *FM 100-10, Field Service Regulations, Administration* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1943), iii.

²¹The U.S. Army Center for Military History published five volumes on the Korean War. The first was published in 1960 and the latest in 1988. The complete collection, beginning with the earliest publication, includes: Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu*; Walter G. Hermes, *Truce Tent and Fighting Front* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1965); James F. Schnabel, *Policy and Direction: The First Year* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1971); Albert E. Cowdrey, *The Medic’s War* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1986); Mossman, *Ebb and Flow*.

²²T. R. Fehrenbach, *This Kind of War: A Study in Unpreparedness* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1963).

²³Heintz, *Victory at High Tide*.

²⁴Edwin Palmer Hoyt, *On to the Yalu* (New York: Military Heritage, 1988).

²⁵Blair, *The Forgotten War*.

1950, offers an encompassing summary of X Corps' activation and subsequent actions in Korea throughout 1950 as an independent command, including the detailed actions of specific X Corps units.²⁶ Richard Stewart's *Staff Operations: The X Corps in Korea, December 1950*, specifically focuses on the unit's withdrawal from northeast Korea and the follow-on evacuation through the port of Hungnam in December 1950.²⁷ Finally, Alan R. Millett's *The War for Korea, 1950-1951: They Came from the North*, provides the overarching political context and strategic narrative for U.S. military involvement in the Korean War as well as a detailed summary of tactical actions.²⁸

Despite the abundance of published Korean War literature, the existing body of knowledge lacks a concise synopsis and examination of the elements that molded the X Corps as it expanded the Inchon beachhead to secure Seoul, prepared for offensive actions in northeast Korea, and attacked north to the Yalu River. Leadership (both good and bad) is often cited as the decisive factor. However, leadership alone is inconclusive because it hinges on a myriad of situational influences and is only one component of the command environment. The commander's performance offers another plausible explanation, but true military misfortunes reflect the entire organization and can never be fully attributed to any one individual.²⁹ Lack of doctrine presents another potential justification, but the U.S. Army entered the Korean War with published doctrine honed in the crucible of World War II.

Three factors affected the X Corps' ability to conduct operations between the success at Inchon and the withdrawal from the Chosin Reservoir. First, its organizational structure included an ad hoc headquarters and partially formed and trained Army, Marine Corps, and Republic of

²⁶Shelby Stanton, *America's Tenth Legion: X Corps in Korea, 1950* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1989).

²⁷Stewart, *Staff Operations*.

²⁸Millett, *They Came From the North*.

²⁹Eliot A. Cohen and John Gooch, *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War* (New York: Free Press, 1990), 3.

Korea units. The X Corps ultimately lacked adequate time to build cohesive teams before commencing operations. Second, the operations process affected how the organization planned ahead, provided administrative support, and coordinated the actions of its assigned units. The Corps neglected to perform these duties consistently. Third, the command environment reflected a variety of factors that caused a lack of teamwork among higher, adjacent, and subordinate units and hindered the Corps' ability to conduct operations. Together, the organizational structure, operations process, and command environment offer a way to examine the factors that affected the X Corps' ability to expand the Inchon beachhead to secure Seoul, prepare for offensive actions in northeast Korea, and attack north to the Yalu River.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

At the onset of hostilities in Korea, contemporary doctrine attributed cohesion within a unit to “good leadership, discipline, pride in the accomplishments and reputation of the unit, and mutual confidence and comradeship among its members.”³⁰ It further explained that cohesion must be thoroughly planned and systematically imbued into the organization through appropriate manning, equipping, and training of individual soldiers and collective units. Moreover, because war is the ultimate test of physical endurance and moral stamina, the individual soldier must be physically fit and disciplined. Discipline, according to published doctrine, “is the main cohesive force that binds the members of a unit” and allows it to endure the hardships of field service.³¹

Unfortunately, the X Corps entered the Korean War with an ad hoc headquarters and partially formed and trained Army, Marine Corps, and Republic of Korea units. Each of these critical components mobilized for war at varying levels of personnel, equipment, and training readiness and overcame significant obstacles to form rapidly for combat operations. Ultimately,

³⁰United States War Department, *FM 100-5*, 18.

³¹*Ibid.*, 18, 20.

however, the X Corps lacked adequate time to build cohesive teams before commencing operations in Korea.

The Eighth Army deactivated its two standing corps headquarters in April 1950 because Japan lacked sufficient training space to exercise larger units.³² As a result, MacArthur was forced to either reactivate one or choose a standing headquarters to lead the X Corps. He chose the former despite the strong urging of senior Far East Command leadership that he pick a standing Marine Headquarters.³³ Thus, on 15 August 1950, he established Special Planning Staff, General Headquarters, to spearhead the Inchon-Seoul campaign and designated it the General Headquarters reserve to maintain secrecy. Far East Command General Order 24 activated Headquarters, X Corps, on 26 August 1950, and all General Headquarters Reserve units in Japan- or in route there- subsequently received orders to X Corps.³⁴

MacArthur selected Almond to command and anticipated that Almond would retain his position as Chief of Staff throughout the campaign and return to his old position in Tokyo after the invasion. Shortly thereafter, Major General Clark L. Ruffner assumed duties as Chief of Staff and, along with MacArthur and Almond, handpicked the remainder of the X Corps staff from the Far East Command headquarters.³⁵ Over thirty Navy and Marine Corps officers and enlisted men from an Amphibious Group 1 training team augmented the staff, and Marine Forces Pacific sent experienced officers to serve with the Corps.³⁶ Thus, while the X Corps manned its provisional

³²Flint, "Task Force Smith," 273.

³³MacArthur believed the Inchon landing would end quickly and that the Eighth Army would take over upon successful conclusion of the Inchon-Seoul campaign. He further believed that once ashore, the X Corps faced an inland advance over eighteen miles, several river crossings, and the capture of Seoul- all tasks better suited for an Army organization than Marines. Heinl, *Victory at High Tide*, 52-54, 191.

³⁴Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu*, 490-491.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Millett, *They Came from the North*, 240.

headquarters with capable, quality officers from across the services, it nonetheless commenced operations in Korea with a newly formed team that had little experience working together.³⁷

Moreover, the extensive demobilization following World War II left the U.S. Army unprepared for the Korean War.³⁸ It struggled to provide occupation forces in Europe and Japan with thinly spread forces, and fiscal constraints forced it to defer equipment modernization and training to meet manpower costs.³⁹ In June 1950, the active component consisted of ten total divisions and eleven separate regiments. Four infantry divisions conducted occupation duty in Japan under the Eighth Army and were immediately available to MacArthur, as were the 5th Regimental Combat Team and 29th Infantry Regiment operating from the Hawaiian Islands and Okinawa, respectively. Additionally, one infantry division, two infantry regiments, and a constabulary force (roughly equal to a division) were in Europe, two infantry regiments were in the Caribbean, and the remaining general reserve was concentrated in the United States.⁴⁰

The divisions operated with two instead of the normal three battalions in an infantry regiment and averaged seventy percent of full strength, typically numbering between 12,000 and 13,000 men instead of their authorized war strength of almost 19,000.⁴¹ Only the 24th Regiment, 25th Division, enjoyed its full strength of three infantry battalions and one artillery battalion.⁴²

³⁷The X Corps staff contained numerous high-caliber officers that would go on to assume senior Army and government leadership positions. Two officers rose to four stars, three rose to three stars, and one rose to two stars. Additionally, Almond's aide-de-camp, Alexander Haig, Jr., later served as Secretary of State after retiring as a four star general. Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 289.

³⁸William M. Donnelly, "'The Best Army That Can Be Put in the Field in the Circumstances': The U.S. Army, July 1951-July 1953," *The Journal of Military History* 71, no. 3 (July 2007): 809–847.

³⁹Flint, "Task Force Smith," 297.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 269.

⁴¹United States Army, Eighth Army Korea, "Logistics Study of the Korean Campaigns, 1950-1953," December 31, 1954, <http://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p4013coll11/id/1083> (accessed August 4, 2013), 17.

⁴²Millett, *They Came from the North*, 75-84; United States Army, Eighth Army Korea, "Logistics Study of the Korean Campaigns, 1950-1953," 4.

The artillery battalions also included two of the normal three firing batteries and functioned at two-thirds personnel strength. Logistics and service organizations likewise lacked sufficient technical service personnel to form and operate because the Far East Command allocated their personnel to the combat units.⁴³ All organizations also operated with heavily worn World War II equipment and transports and lacked their full allocation of machine guns, mortars, recoilless rifles, antitank guns, and radios.⁴⁴ MacArthur received permission to expand the Far East Command infantry divisions to full personnel and equipment strength on 19 July 1950, less than two months prior to the Inchon landings.⁴⁵

Moreover, as late as the spring of 1949, the Eighth Army prioritized its occupation duty of Japan over training and combat readiness.⁴⁶ Lieutenant General Walton H. Walker assumed command in the summer of 1949 and reversed these priorities, initiating a training program to increase the combat readiness of units assigned to occupation duty in Japan. He intended to transform his organization from an “easygoing colonial army” to combined arms teams of infantry, armor, and artillery units working closely together at the company and battalion levels.⁴⁷ Most battalions progressed through training but regimental, division, corps, and army levels of training and maneuver had not been executed.⁴⁸ Thus, at the outset of the Korean War, U.S. Army

⁴³United States Army, Eighth Army Korea, “Logistics Study of the Korean Campaigns, 1950-1953,” 9, 17-18.

⁴⁴Flint, “Task Force Smith,” 274.

⁴⁵Millett, *They Came from the North*, 75-84.

⁴⁶Flint, “Task Force Smith,” 269-270.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 273.

⁴⁸Regimental, division, corps, and army levels of training and maneuver had not been executed for two reasons. First, Japan simply lacked the space for training areas that could accommodate large unit exercises. The small training areas also restricted simultaneous infantry maneuver and artillery live fire, resulted in tanks being eliminated from units because there was not enough space to train with them, and, as previously mentioned, prompted the deactivation of the Eighth Army’s two corps headquarters. Second, Walker simply ran out of time to finish training his army when the North Koreans attacked in June 1950. United States Army, Eighth Army Korea, “Logistical Study of the Korean Campaigns, 1950-1953,” 18.

forces in Japan resembled a colonial army capable of administrative duties and garrison activities but lacked the mindset and training to go to war.⁴⁹

Not surprisingly, Major General David G. Barr's 7th Infantry Division faced significant challenges to achieve its authorized war strength. On 26 July, the Far East Command ordered the division to prepare for movement to Korea from Japan. Earlier in the month, the Far East Command had transferred 140 officers and over 1,500 Soldiers from the 7th Infantry Division to the 24th and 25th Infantry Divisions and the 1st Cavalry Division to prepare them for deployment.⁵⁰ Additionally, the 7th Infantry Division constituted the replacement pool for fighting in Central Korea and the Pusan Perimeter.⁵¹ To make matters worse, it had also been dispersed throughout the Japanese islands providing security and training the incoming Korean War replacements and therefore had not trained as a unit.⁵² Moreover, Almond selected several key division staff members for his own headquarters, which further exacerbated staffing problems. Thus, at notification for deployment, the division operated at less than half its authorized war strength (over 9,100 personnel undermanned) with far greater shortages in critical specialties.⁵³

To prepare the 7th Infantry Division for operations in Korea, the Far East Command expedited almost 400 officers and 5,400 enlisted personnel replacements, including experienced Fort Benning-trained artillery and infantry crew-served weapons soldiers. With MacArthur's permission, Almond also redirected numerous inbound Eighth Army units to the X Corps including seven artillery battalions (instead of its authorized four), the 2nd Engineer Special

⁴⁹Flint, "Task Force Smith," 270, 273-274.

⁵⁰Millett, *They Came from the North*, 246.

⁵¹Heinl, *Victory at High Tide*, 55.

⁵²Stanton, *America's Tenth Legion*, 37.

⁵³Millett, *They Came from the North*, 246.

Brigade, construction engineers, an amphibious tractor company, ammunition handlers, communicators, and port builders.⁵⁴ Moreover, the Republic of Korea 17th Infantry Regiment served with the division during the Inchon-Seoul campaign in place of its own detached 17th Infantry.⁵⁵ Additionally, to satisfy the remaining personnel shortfalls, MacArthur approved Korean augmentation of American divisions on 15 August and ordered 8,637 South Korean replacements to fill the division's ranks. However, the division received its raw Korean recruits just three weeks shy of D-Day on Inchon.⁵⁶ In contrast to the American new-arrivals, most South Koreans arrived wearing inadequate civilian attire, speaking almost no English, and generally "stunned, confused, and exhausted."⁵⁷ Thus, while the 7th Infantry Division landed at Inchon close to full strength, the unit lacked experience, training, and cohesion.⁵⁸

Like the 7th Infantry Division, the 3d Infantry Division faced daunting challenges to form and train for operations in Korea. The Department of the Army moved the 3d Infantry Division from the United States to Japan from August through September 1950 to increase the Far East Command's strength.⁵⁹ In early October, the division received notification for deployment to Korea and subsequently joined the X Corps at Wonsan on 6 November.⁶⁰ Only two months earlier, in mid-July, the division had served as a replacement pool and training unit at Fort Benning, Georgia, with little prospects for deployment. It provided cadres, individual replacements, and entire units to the Far East with increasing frequency and urgency, with

⁵⁴Heinl, *Victory at High Tide*, 118, 149, 223.

⁵⁵Gordon L. Rottman, *Inchon 1950: The Last Great Amphibious Assault* (Oxford, England: Osprey Publishing, 2006), 35-36.

⁵⁶Heinl, *Victory at High Tide*, 55-56.

⁵⁷Appleman, *South to the Nakdong, North to the Yalu*, 492.

⁵⁸Heinl, *Victory at High Tide*, 157.

⁵⁹Millett, *They Came from the North*, 75-84.

⁶⁰United States Army, X Corps, "Big X in Korea," 1954, United States Army Military History Institute (USAMHI), X Corps Collection, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 9.

officers, non-commissioned officers, and critical specialists departing daily. Thus, on 10 August, Brigadier General Robert H. Soule assumed command of a depleted division quickly approaching combat ineffectiveness.⁶¹

The 3d Infantry Division effected several organizational changes to prepare for Korea and fill its depleted ranks. First, it redistributed personnel and traded severely understrength organizations for more adequately manned ones. In early October, it also received 8,500 fresh Korean recruits with no training or military equipment other than new M-1 rifles. The division leadership assigned their Korean recruits to American squads that frequently consisted of two American enlisted men and eight Koreans. In late October, the division also received 1,500 replacements from the United States and worked diligently to train and integrate them before departing for Korea in early November. A few weeks later, in early November, the division also joined the Republic of Korea 26th Regiment upon its arrival at Wonsan.⁶²

The division also implemented a shipboard training program for its units transiting from California to Japan. Training consisted of unit-specific drill, physical conditioning, and Japan and Korea orientation as well as preliminary marksmanship training for recent unit joins that had not completed basic training. While in Japan, division units also conducted small arms and crew-served weapons ranges and executed squad, platoon, and company tactical exercises to prepare for their pending operations in Korea.⁶³ Despite its concerted efforts, however, the 3d Infantry Division commenced operations in northeast Korea with newly formed and partially trained units.

Similar to the U.S. Army, the U.S. Marine Corps comprised a fraction of its World War II personnel strength on the eve of the Korean War. On 30 June 1950, less than 75,000 Marines

⁶¹Max W. Dolcater, ed., *3d Infantry Division in Korea* (Tokyo, Japan: Toppan Printing Company, Limited, 1952), 57-58.

⁶²*Ibid.*, 58-63.

⁶³*Ibid.*

served on active duty with approximately 40,000 of those in the operating forces engaged directly in carrying out assigned missions and tasks.⁶⁴ The remaining 35,000 Marines served in the supporting establishment, on special assignments, or were otherwise non-available. Within the operating forces, the Fleet Marine Force numbered less than 28,000 and operated predominantly from the United States with the 1st Marine Division at Camp Pendleton, California, and the 2d Marine Division at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. One 2d Marine Division battalion also operated afloat in the Mediterranean.⁶⁵ Additionally, the Marine Corps maintained a large, rapidly employable, and high quality reserve component to complement the steadily declining active ranks during the post-World War II years. As a result, the Marine reserves amounted to almost 129,000 total personnel, nearly double the active duty component.⁶⁶

Despite its skeleton structure, the Marine Corps continued to mandate individual and unit training for both active duty and reserve Marines after World War II. In accordance with United States Marine Corps General Order No. 10, all active duty Marines, regardless of military occupational specialty or assigned unit, conducted annual weapons qualification and trained for basic infantry tasks.⁶⁷ Moreover, the 1st Marine Division and 1st Marine Aircraft Wing participated in eight major field exercises in the months leading up to the Korean War, including a simulated amphibious assault involving all principal elements of the division and air wing, using the same well-maintained weapons and equipment they would use in Korea.⁶⁸ The 2d

⁶⁴Lynn Montross and Nicholas A. Canzona, *U.S. Marine Operations in Korea, 1950-1953, Volume II: The Inchon-Seoul Operation* (Washington, DC: Historical Branch, G-3, Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps, 1955), 20-21.

⁶⁵Millett, *They Came from the North*, 75-84.

⁶⁶Ernest H. Giusti, "Minute Men-1950 Model: The Reserves in Action," *Marine Corps Gazette* (September 1951): 25.

⁶⁷Montross and Canzona, *The Inchon-Seoul Operation*, 20.

⁶⁸On 30 June 1950, the 1st Marine Division and 1st Marine Aircraft Wing maintained a 98.3 and 95.6 percent material readiness, respectively, highlighting their organizational equipment's readiness for operations in Korea. Ernest H. Giusti, *Mobilization of the Marine Corps Reserve in the Korean Conflict*,

Marine Division and 2d Marine Aircraft Wing conducted similar ground, air, and air-ground training on the North Carolina and Virginia coasts as well as in the Caribbean, focusing on close support and amphibious landings. Marine reservists also conducted both armory and active duty summer training and their reserve units paired with similar Fleet Marine Force units to build proficiency. Thus, by the summer of 1950, a large portion of the reservists had conducted basic and advanced individual training as well as unit training, making them “nearly combat ready” when the 1st Marine Division began to expand for war.⁶⁹

Major General Oliver P. Smith assumed command of 1st Marine Division on 25 July 1950. That same day, the Commandant of the Marine Corps ordered him to bring the division to its authorized war strength of approximately 25,000 personnel and sail for Korea no later than 15 August. The division consisted of fewer than 3,500 Marines total when Smith assumed command, less than a single full-strength regiment, and far short of its goal.⁷⁰ Only a few weeks earlier, on 30 June, the division numbered almost 8,000 but had been stripped of its principal operating elements to build the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade for service in the Pusan Perimeter.⁷¹

To prepare the division for deployment, the President, with Congressional sanction, authorized the recall of Marine reservists to active duty. By 11 September, almost 2,000 officers and 32,000 enlisted Marines from the Organized Ground Reserve reported for active duty. Additionally, the Chief of Naval Operations authorized a fifty percent reduction in Marine security forces within the continental United States, enabling almost 4,000 active duty Marines to report for service with the 1st Marine Division.⁷² Congress also authorized the President to extend

1950-1951 (Washington, DC: Historical Branch, G-3, Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps, 1967), 9-10.

⁶⁹Ibid., 19-20.

⁷⁰Edwin H. Simmons, *Over the Seawall: U.S. Marines at Inchon*, Korean War Commemorative Series (Washington, DC: Marine Corps Historical Center, 2000), 8.

⁷¹Montross and Canzona, *The Inchon-Seoul Operation*, 17-18.

⁷²Giusti, *Mobilization of the Marine Corps Reserve in the Korean Conflict*, 9-10.

all active duty and reserve enlistments due to expire before 9 July 1951 for one year to ensure a stable body of active and reserve troops.⁷³ The 2d Marine Division provided an additional almost 7,000 active duty Marines to augment the 1st Marine Division, and another approximately 3,600 active duty Marines from 105 posts and stations arrived at Camp Pendleton in early August. Given the urgency of the situation, the 1st Marine Division leadership then selected the most combat-ready reservists available based on previous training or military experience and assigned them to deploying units. The remaining personnel rendered assistance in almost every function at Camp Pendleton to maximize the division's training opportunities before it departed for Korea.⁷⁴

Despite these efforts, the division remained at less than its authorized war strength in early September. To fill the remaining shortages, Almond successfully convinced MacArthur to extract the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade from Eighth Army at the Pusan Perimeter in preparation for the Inchon-Seoul campaign.⁷⁵ Almond also accepted the Marine Corps recommendation to establish the X Corps Tactical Air Command to request and control air strikes from any unit using Marine-trained tactical air support teams.⁷⁶ Additionally, the Commandant of the Marine Corps formed the 7th and 11th Marine Regiments from ad hoc infantry, artillery, and combat service support units from the 2nd Marine Division.⁷⁷ However, because the division commenced the Inchon-Seoul campaign before the 7th Marine Regiment arrived, the 1st Korean

⁷³Montross and Canzona, *The Inchon-Seoul Operation*, 23.

⁷⁴Giusti, *Mobilization of the Marine Corps Reserve in the Korean Conflict*, 10-13.

⁷⁵Heinl, *Victory at High Tide*, 63.

⁷⁶Marine Air Group-33, under the command of Brigadier General Thomas J. Cushman, relinquished its close support role in the Pusan Perimeter and assumed duties as the operating element for the X Corps Tactical Air Command on 19 September. Simmons, *Over the Seawall*, 23, 55-56; Millett, *They Came from the North*, 243, 246; Heinl, *Victory at High Tide*, 118, 149, 223.

⁷⁷Heinl, *Victory at High Tide*, 186-187.

Marine Corps Regiment served in its place.⁷⁸ Thus, the 1st Marine Division ultimately met its authorized war strength but commenced operations with newly formed teams.

The Republic of Korea units endured pre-war training and personnel hardships similar to their American counterparts, and ongoing combat operations only exacerbated those challenges. The I Republic of Korea Corps, consisting of the 3d and Capital Divisions, joined the X Corps on 20 October.⁷⁹ In early June, prior to North Korea's invasion, South Korean forces were configured almost purely for border protection and internal security duties, possessed no tanks, medium artillery, fighter aircraft, or bombers, and maintained an air force of twenty-two total aircraft.⁸⁰ The Capital Division included three regiments and totaled almost 10,000 personnel. While it appeared full strength on paper, the division was primarily a ceremonial unit and palace guard and lacked basic artillery and infantry training. The 3d Division likewise entered the Korean War with two regiments and little more than 7,000 of its authorized 10,000 personnel. Additionally, by late July 1950, both divisions had already experienced significant combat losses.⁸¹ Over the next three months, the divisions operated near Pusan and Inchon, traversed the Korean peninsula, and conducted operations along the east coast in frequent enemy contact.

To its credit, the Republic of Korea Army headquarters continually reorganized its forces during that time. As a result, the X Corps assumed control of I Republic of Korea Corps forces totaling just less than 24,000 personnel.⁸² The 3d and Capital Divisions each consisted of approximately 11,500 soldiers assembled from across the force. However, the X Corps lacked familiarity with the units and exercised minimal control. In fact, I Republic of Korea Corps

⁷⁸Rottman, *Inchon 1950*, 35-36.

⁷⁹United States Army, X Corps, "Big X in Korea," 8.

⁸⁰Robert M. Citino, *Blitzkrieg to Desert Storm: The Evolution of Operational Warfare* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 119.

⁸¹Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu*, 14, 29, 190-191.

⁸²*Ibid.*, 685-686.

elements operated deep across the 38th parallel when X Corps assumed the area of operations in October 1950.⁸³ As a result, minimal, if any, cohesion existed within the newly formed South Korean units or between American and South Korean forces at the outset of operations.

The previous discussion highlights that the X Corps lacked sufficient time to build cohesive teams prior to combat actions. In many instances, the X Corps marched freshly formed units off to war with unfamiliar, partially trained soldiers and Korean recruits that spoke little if any English. As a result, the Corps' ability to conduct operations in Korea from 15 September through 30 November 1950 suffered. The demobilization following World War II and limited interwar budgets left the U.S. armed forces largely unprepared for the Korean War.⁸⁴ While many units eventually approached full strength, they frequently lacked collective training and experience working together and, therefore, cohesion. Moreover, the poor performance of American and South Korean forces during the first two and a half months of the war engendered an overarching lack of confidence in their own abilities. This dearth of confidence likewise affected the Corps' operational effectiveness throughout its operations in northeast Korea.⁸⁵

Additionally, while the Far East Command rapidly filled the Corps' depleted ranks, the methods it used to accomplish this produced unintended consequences. First, the reallocation of technical service personnel from logistics and service units to combat units necessitated the use of untrained South Koreans for administration and thus affected the quality of administrative support provided.⁸⁶ Additionally, at face value, the redirection of incoming personnel from Eighth Army to X Corps and reassignment of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade to the Inchon-Seoul campaign degraded Eighth Army's ability to breakout from the Pusan Perimeter and regain the operational

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Donnelly, "The Best Army that Can Be Put in the Field."

⁸⁵Hoyt, *On to the Yalu*, 52.

⁸⁶United States Army, Eighth Army Korea, "Logistics Study of the Korean Campaigns, 1950-1953," 13-15.

initiative. More poignantly, the redistribution of those personnel degraded the already tenuous command environment within the Far East Command and largely affected X Corps' performance.

Finally, historian Robert D. Heinl posits that X Corps' "hasty and improvised character" caused its headquarters to repeatedly perform below expectations.⁸⁷ Heinl specifically asserts that Lieutenant General Lemuel Shepherd's Fleet Marine Forces Pacific headquarters possessed the expertise and structure to successfully accomplish both the amphibious and land aspects of the Inchon-Seoul campaign and beyond.⁸⁸ In fact, both Admiral Sherman and Brigadier General Wright recommended to MacArthur that the Marines lead based on Shepherd's amphibious experience, his staff's expertise, and the limited time available to plan a major ship to shore assault.⁸⁹ Therefore, in Heinl's view, X Corps' assignment as the headquarters proved unnecessary from the beginning. Indeed, despite its talented, handpicked staff, the provisional corps headquarters struggled to function consistently. This, too, immensely affected the X Corps' ability to conduct operations in Korea from September through November 1950.

OPERATIONS PROCESS

In addition to commencing operations with newly formed and partially trained units, the X Corps headquarters neglected to consistently plan ahead, provide administrative support, and coordinate the actions of its assigned units in accordance with contemporary published doctrine. *FM 100-15, Larger Units*, noted that "plans for the employment of the corps cannot be improvised. From the initiation of operations until their conclusion, the corps commander and his staff must be planning far in advance of the current situation."⁹⁰ The doctrine specifically advised commanders to visualize the whole campaign days and weeks into the future and to avoid

⁸⁷Heinl, *Victory at High Tide*, 259.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Simmons, *Over the Seawall*, 16; Montross and Canzona, *The Inchon-Seoul Operation*, 43.

⁹⁰United States War Department, *FM 100-15, Larger Units*, 67.

spending too much time on local successes and failures. It also urged the corps to remain focused on the campaign objectives while maintaining the flexibility to exploit favorable developments.⁹¹

Moreover, contemporary doctrine advised a corps operating independently from an army to ensure the administrative arrangements necessary for projected operations including supply, maintenance, transportation, medical, and personnel management. In effect, an independent corps becomes a small army responsible for its own supply, evacuation, and installations. Doctrine thus encouraged the corps headquarters to continuously coordinate with the subordinate divisions and corps troops to discern support requirements and update the administrative plan accordingly.⁹²

Additionally, doctrine outlined the corps' responsibility to ensure the coordination and mutual support necessary between adjacent divisions to successfully execute the corps' scheme of maneuver.⁹³ However, it also cautioned the corps commander to "leave the details of execution of the plan to the commanders of divisions and corps troops" while influencing the outcome of battle through close contact with the leading divisions, coordination of troop dispositions, and the decisive use of corps artillery, combat aviation, armored units, and the corps reserve as appropriate.⁹⁴ Doctrine similarly reminded the corps that throughout operations, subordinate units require timely information to enable their own careful staff planning and balancing of time and space factors to meet corps objectives.⁹⁵

In some cases, the X Corps adhered to its doctrine and enjoyed success. In other instances, however, it struggled with its roles and responsibilities and the subordinate divisions either lost opportunities or failed to accomplish their assigned missions. The X Corps' operations

⁹¹Ibid., 10-11.

⁹²United States War Department, *FM 100-10, Administration*, 59-71, 73.

⁹³United States War Department, *FM 100-15, Larger Units*, 64.

⁹⁴Ibid., 57-58.

⁹⁵Ibid., 63.

to expand the Inchon beachhead to secure Seoul, prepare for offensive actions in northeast Korea, and attack north to the Yalu River highlight these inconsistencies.

The X Corps successfully expanded the Inchon beachhead and ultimately secured Seoul in accordance with Far East Command guidance by massing an integrated force of six regiments in a narrow geographical area aimed straight at Seoul, maintaining adequate flank support, and retaining adequate reserves.⁹⁶ Additionally, the Corps' speed and shock prevented the enemy from mustering sufficient force for a counterattack and clearly relieved pressure on the Pusan Perimeter as early as 19 September when the North Korean High Command began to send the southern forces northward to Seoul.⁹⁷ Indeed, by 23 September, the North Korean retrograde movement to the Inchon-Seoul area rendered the enemy cordon around the Pusan Perimeter ineffective.⁹⁸

Despite its eventual success in securing Seoul, the Corps headquarters neglected to plan for campaign objectives beyond the amphibious assault at Inchon. As Almond noted in later reflection, "We could already see the landing had been successful the first day, which was really the critical point. Once ashore, we had no fear of being able to take care of any enemy that might meet us eventually."⁹⁹ As a result, the Corps headquarters was required to conduct planning sessions immediately after coming ashore for events that would occur within hours and days as opposed to planning weeks and months in advance. For example, Ruffner met with Smith and Barr on D-day to coordinate the follow-on landing and employment of the 7th Infantry Division

⁹⁶Stanton, *America's Tenth Legion*, 114-115.

⁹⁷Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 273.

⁹⁸Appleman, *South to the Nakdong, North to the Yalu*, 572.

⁹⁹Stanton, *America's Tenth Legion*, 75.

in the capture of Seoul. Almond also conducted a planning conference at his headquarters in Inchon on 23 September to develop a plan to secure Seoul less than two days later.¹⁰⁰

The Corps' early focus on the amphibious landing at the expense of longer-range planning also resulted in partially effective administrative support. In some cases, it neglected to request capabilities because it did not realize it needed them.¹⁰¹ For example, planners acknowledged the requirement for crossing the Han River but allocated no bridging equipment.¹⁰² Additionally, both the Fifth Air Force and the X Corps neglected to provide the expeditionary equipment, vehicles, and airfield operations infrastructure required to keep Kimpo Airfield functional after the 1st Marine Division secured it. As a result, Marine Air Group-33 assumed all airfield and communications support at Kimpo Airfield and the 1st Marine Division unexpectedly provided vehicles and other scarce resources to maintain airfield functionality.¹⁰³ Even when initial planning did identify a requirement, the Corps struggled to maintain the flow of supplies forward due to its provisional headquarters status.¹⁰⁴ The resulting lengthy approval process, along with new and inexperienced personnel, delayed the Corps' ability to get what it needed and resulted in subordinate units performing- or providing resources to perform- what the Corps should have performed for them.¹⁰⁵ This too affected the divisions' ability to conduct operations.

¹⁰⁰Heinl, *Victory at High Tide*, 133, 211.

¹⁰¹Millett, *They Came from the North*, 244.

¹⁰²Hoyt, *On to the Yalu*, 125.

¹⁰³Heinl, *Victory at High Tide*, 143-144.

¹⁰⁴To maintain secrecy, no table of organization and equipment was prescribed when the Corps headquarters activated. While published equipment and personnel tables served as a guide, the Corps modified actual allowances to reflect that X Corps, as an independent command, would be performing duties similar to a field army headquarters. As a result, all items had to be requisitioned and approved as "over and beyond" authorized allowances. United States Army, Eighth Army Korea, "Monograph: Special Problems in the Korean Conflict," <http://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p4013coll11/id/1695> (accessed August 4, 2013), 53.

¹⁰⁵Heinl, *Victory at High Tide*, 259-261.

Overall, the Corps effectively coordinated the liberation of Seoul. However, several examples highlight inconsistencies in coordination that resulted in lost opportunities for the divisions. On 19 September, the 1st Marine Regiment expected to conduct an early morning relief in place with the 32d Infantry Regiment and execute a follow-on attack that same day. However, the 32d Infantry Regiment commander believed his unit needed to replace the Marines by 20 September. As a result, the Marines launched their attack late with two battalions instead of three because they left a battalion behind to conduct the relief in place. The 32d Infantry Regiment then encountered enemy resistance reestablishing the vacant Marine positions.¹⁰⁶ Next, throughout the fight for Yongdungpo, the Corps headquarters proved incapable of resolving repeated 1st Marine Division reports of incoming fire from the 7th Infantry Division's area of operations on their right flank. The 7th Infantry Division contended that the area in question remained quiet. While the problem ultimately hinged on erroneous communication of map coordinates,¹⁰⁷ the misunderstanding nonetheless impeded progress and distracted both units from accomplishing their assigned Corps objectives.¹⁰⁸ Next, the Corps staff struggled with timely clearance of fires and command and control during the assault into Yongdungpo. The X Corps often required more than seven hours to coordinate and approve cross-boundary fires, even with explicit approval and precoordination between the requesting and neighboring units.¹⁰⁹ Finally, the chain of command also lacked situational awareness on Company A, 1st Marine Regiment's lone advance into the heart of Yongdungpo on 21 September.¹¹⁰ As a result, no X Corps elements reinforced the lone

¹⁰⁶Heinl, *Victory at High Tide*, 156-157; Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 277.

¹⁰⁷Japanese maps frequently proved to be inaccurate and outdated with villages, streams, roads, and entire hill masses incorrectly positioned or omitted. The Japanese maps also used different grid systems that made location reporting and fire control difficult. Rottman, *Inchon 1950*, 51.

¹⁰⁸Hoyt, *On to the Yalu*, 103; Heinl, *Victory at High Tide*, 181, 183.

¹⁰⁹Heinl, *Victory at High Tide*, 167, 169.

¹¹⁰The company discovered a seam in the North Korean defenses and advanced unopposed into the

company or sought to exploit a vulnerable enemy supply depot that may have hastened the liberation of Seoul or the defeat of North Korean forces.¹¹¹

With operations in the Inchon-Seoul area concluding and the Eighth Army-X Corps linkup complete, MacArthur began preparing for offensive actions in northeast Korea. He issued Far East Command Operation Plan 9-50 on 29 September, outlining operations north of the 38th Parallel to complete the destruction of the North Korean forces and implement the 1947 United Nations resolution for the unification of Korea. He tasked the X Corps to conduct an amphibious assault at Wonsan on the east coast of Korea on 20 October (designated as D-Day), secure a beachhead, make juncture with the Eighth Army drive north to Pyongyang, and destroy encircled and fleeing North Korean forces.¹¹²

Accordingly, the Corps conducted detailed planning and coordination for the amphibious landings on the east coast. Upon assuming command of the northeast Korea zone of operations, Almond conducted a series of conferences to organize civil government and coordinate X Corps policy and unit missions.¹¹³ Additionally, he conferred regularly with the Far East Command staff, commanders and staff of supporting naval and air units, the division leadership, the civic leaders of Wonsan, Hamhung, and other large cities on the east coast of North Korea, and the I

heart of Yongdungpo. It dug in for the night over a mile and a half beyond the closest friendly units and well in the enemy's rear, eventually establishing a commanding defensive position near the North Korean People's Army supply center. However, by nightfall, the company lost communications with the battalion command post due to a weak radio battery. Montross and Canzona, *The Inchon-Seoul Campaign*, 226, 228.

¹¹¹Colonel Lewis A. "Chesty" Puller, the Commanding Officer of the 1st Marine Regiment, asserts that he was not aware of Company A's breakthrough. Therefore, it is unlikely that the 1st Marine Division or the Corps headquarters fully understood the disposition of forces late on 21 September. Heinl, *Victory at High Tide*, 177-178.

¹¹²United States Army, X Corps, "Monthly Summary (Korea) Wonsan-Iwon Landings – October 1950," Harry S. Truman Library (Truman), RG 407, Box 26, Independence, MO, 1; Montross and Canzona, *The Chosin Reservoir Campaign*, 10.

¹¹³For example, at a conference in Wonsan on 24 October, participants discussed reconstruction of the fishing industry and medical facilities, comparison of the population with that of a year ago, Communist land reforms, and money problems. Almond hosted another conference at Hamhung on 31 October where attendees discussed many of the same issues. United States Army, X Corps, "Monthly Summary (Korea) Wonsan-Iwon Landings – October 1950," 3, 6-7, 11, 25.

Republic of Korea Korean Military Advisor Group advisors and unit commanders. Almond also conducted daily staff briefings and met frequently with his chief of staff and special staff officers on matters of pressing concern. He likewise established a Corps liaison group and forward headquarters at Wonsan with representation from the office of the chief of staff and every staff section. Additionally, Almond conducted extensive aerial and ground reconnaissance to validate the Corps' concept of operations and survey the lines of communication, bridges, Wonsan airfield, port facilities, landing beaches, and railhead sites.¹¹⁴ He similarly made almost daily visits to units throughout his zone of operations to personally gauge the Corps' preparations.

However, despite Almond's personal involvement, he and his planners neglected to anticipate the repercussions of their administrative support plan or fully consider possible contingencies. First, the reembarkation through Inchon and Pusan in preparation for the Wonsan and Iwon landings caused massive confusion and supply bottlenecks.¹¹⁵ Additionally, on 2 October, MacArthur ordered the Eighth Army to provide logistical support to X Corps despite it having no control over the Corps' operations.¹¹⁶ When planners realized that Inchon lacked the capacity to support the simultaneous embarkation of the X Corps and logistical support to the Eighth Army offensive to the north, the Corps gave the 1st Marine Division embarkation priority at Inchon and ordered the 7th Infantry Division and Embarkation Group Charlie¹¹⁷ to proceed by

¹¹⁴The combination of the Corps liaison group, forward headquarters, and extensive reconnaissance resulted in detailed plans for the establishment of potable water points, road improvements to support heavy military traffic, the repair and operation of existing rail lines, the rehabilitation of bridges and roadbeds, and winterization of existing infrastructure, utilities, and lines of communication. Ibid.

¹¹⁵Stewart, *Staff Operations*, 2.

¹¹⁶Stanlis D. Milkowski, "After Inchon: MacArthur's 1950 Campaign in North Korea," in *Historical Perspectives of the Operational Art* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 2007), 422.

¹¹⁷The Corps formed Embarkation Group Charlie to outload certain service elements in support of the Wonsan and Iwon landings. It consisted of medical, engineer, ordnance, chemical, transportation, quartermaster, and signal units that moved by rail and convoy to Pusan from 10-11 October and outloaded from that port. United States Army, X Corps, "Monthly Summary (Korea) Wonsan-Iwon Landings – October 1950," 18.

rail, convoy, and air to Pusan for follow-on embarkation. However, these elements struggled to arrive at Pusan because of the short time available, intersecting lines of communication with the advancing Eighth Army, poor road and railroad conditions, and enemy guerrilla interference.¹¹⁸ As a result, the 7th Infantry Division lost equipment and suffered casualties resulting from guerrilla attacks on two infantry companies and one antiaircraft battery and endured excessive wear and tear on their vehicles due to the rough roads.¹¹⁹

Moreover, the requirement to embark X Corps elements through the ports of Inchon and Pusan slowed incoming cargo to a trickle and forced the Eighth Army to delay its offensive due to lack of supplies.¹²⁰ To compound the problem, improperly loaded ships from Japan had to be reloaded at Inchon to ensure sufficient rations, ammunition, and fuel to support the plan. Despite concerted efforts to alleviate the bottlenecks, the 1st Marine Division departed Inchon the day it was supposed to land at Wonsan. Additionally, the presence of over 3,000 moored and floating mines in Wonsan Harbor delayed the debarkation of X Corps elements for over a week until the U.S. Navy cleared a channel on 26 October and the Corps headquarters and 1st Marine Division could finally land.¹²¹ As a result, the Corps' primary reason for landing at Wonsan- the capture of Pyongyang- quickly became unnecessary and its secondary mission to trap fleeing North Korean People's Army troops simply proved not worthy of the effort and resources expended.¹²²

To its credit, the Corps effectively dealt with the I Republic of Korea Corps' early capture of Wonsan and modified its plans accordingly. As the X Corps units advanced on

¹¹⁸Ibid., 1-2, 18.

¹¹⁹United States Army, Eighth Army Korea, "Monograph: Special Problems in the Korean Conflict," 39.

¹²⁰From 1-17 October, minimal cargo unloaded at Inchon and Pusan and almost all of it went to the X Corps. The Eighth Army ultimately operated most of October- nearly reaching Pyongyang- before it could get any supplies through Inchon. Milkowski, "After Inchon," 421-422.

¹²¹Millett, *They Came from the North*, 281; United States Army, X Corps, "Monthly Summary (Korea) Wonsan-Iwon Landings – October 1950," 2, 23.

¹²²Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 346.

Wonsan by sea, the I Republic of Korea Corps exploited sporadic enemy resistance and captured Wonsan by ground on 10 October, ten days earlier than planned. As a result, the X Corps published operations instruction 11-50 on 14 October to coordinate the actions of its units.¹²³ Five days later, on 19 October, MacArthur activated a contingency plan when the Eighth Army captured Pyongyang before the X Corps landed at Wonsan. He ordered the Eighth Army and X Corps to assume parallel zones of action, designated the Taebek mountain range as the boundary between the forces, and established a new limit of advance farther north along the Tonsil-Pungsan-Songjin line. Accordingly, the X Corps assumed control of all troops in the northeastern zone and published operations instruction 12-50 on 19 October which specified the details of the U.S. 3d Infantry Division's attachment to the Corps upon its landing at Wonsan.¹²⁴

Thus, on 20 October, the X Corps established command ashore at Wonsan and assumed operational control of the I Republic of Korea Corps comprising the 3d and Capital divisions.¹²⁵ The X Corps headquarters and 1st Marine Division began an anti-climatic landing at Wonsan on 26 October and lead elements of the 7th Infantry Division conducted administrative landing at Iwon (approximately 150 miles north of Wonsan) three days later. The 3d Infantry Division began unloading at Wonsan on 6 November under Corps control.¹²⁶ The X Corps ultimately met no enemy resistance as it occupied the northeast coast of Korea with 85,000 troops and prepared to attack north to the Yalu River.¹²⁷

¹²³Operations Instruction 11-50 specified that the I Republic of Korea Corps would fall under X Corps control, secure a beachhead line encompassing Wonsan, reconnoiter two routes for the advance west, and secure Hamhung. The 1st Marine Division and 7th Infantry Division would advance west along the two routes after landing at the Wonsan and Iwon beaches, respectively. Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 2-3.

¹²⁴Ibid.

¹²⁵United States Army, X Corps, "Big X in Korea," 9; United States Army, X Corps, "X Corps Operations, 16 October – 31 December 1950," USAMHI, X Corps Collection, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 3.

¹²⁶United States Army, X Corps, "Big X in Korea," 9-10.

¹²⁷United States Army, X Corps, "Monthly Summary (Korea) Wonsan-Iwon Landings – October 1950," 14; Millett, *They Came from the North*, 284.

To meet MacArthur's intent for a northward offensive to the Yalu River and reach the Manchurian and Soviet Union borders as soon as possible, the 1st Marine Division would advance in the western sector, the 7th Infantry Division in the center, and I Republic of Korea Corps on the east.¹²⁸ X Corps operations instruction 13-50, dated 26 October, specifically tasked the I Republic of Korea Corps to continue its advance along the east coast and secure the Chosin and Fusen Reservoirs and Pungsan as quickly as possible. The 1st Marine Division would protect the Wonsan-Kojo-Majon-ni area, relieve I Republic of Korea elements in the Hamhung area, advance along the Hamhung-Chosin axis to the border, and assist the Republic of Korea engineers in repairing the Wonsan-Hamhung railroad. The 7th Infantry Division would land over the beaches at Iwon and rapidly advance along the Pukchong-Pungsan axis to the border.¹²⁹ Finally, the 3d Infantry Division would conduct a relief in place with 1st Marine Division in the Wonsan area, releasing the Marines to execute their drive to the border.¹³⁰

In preparation for its attack north to the Yalu River, the Corps effectively modified its plan to account for the Eighth Army's changing situation in western Korea. The Eighth Army had encountered considerable Chinese resistance during the second week of November that halted its first attempt to advance to the border. As a result, MacArthur requested that the X Corps assist Eighth Army in any way feasible.¹³¹ Moreover, MacArthur and Wright grew increasingly concerned over Almond's dispersed forces and issued new orders on 15 November to reorient the Corps' attack west upon reaching Chongjin Town.¹³² Accordingly, on 25 November, the X Corps

¹²⁸United States Army, X Corps, "Special Report on Chosin Reservoir, 27 November to 10 December 1950," USAMHI, X Corps Collection, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 2.

¹²⁹United States Army, X Corps, "Monthly Summary (Korea) Wonsan-Iwon Landings – October 1950," 4.

¹³⁰United States Army, X Corps, "Special Report on Chosin Reservoir, 27 November to 10 December 1950," 2.

¹³¹*Ibid.*, 3, 9.

¹³²Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 417.

issued operations order 7-50 which outlined the plan to sever the enemy's main supply route at Mupyong-ni and destroy enemy forces in zone to the northern boundary of Korea along the Yalu and Rumen rivers.¹³³

However, the Corps' plan ignored numerous signs of large-scale Chinese intervention in North Korea despite being fully aware of their presence, especially in vicinity of the Chosin Reservoir.¹³⁴ Almond had interrogated sixteen Chinese prisoners of war, notified MacArthur of his findings via personal message, and actually shown the prisoners to Major General Charles Willoughby, the G-2 of MacArthur's Far East Command.¹³⁵ Moreover, from 16-30 November, Almond attended three and a half daily conferences on average and conducted at least one offsite visit each day, speaking with a multitude of civilian and military personnel on the developing situation.¹³⁶ Nonetheless, he ultimately concluded that the Chinese Communist Forces posed no real danger to the X Corps and thus continued his planned advance to the Yalu River.

To that end, the Corps developed and articulated an effective administrative support plan that included both air and ground contingencies. While the Eighth Army logistically supported the X Corps through the Wonsan landings, it proved unable to provision the Corps' advance into northeast Korea through the normal channels due to extreme distances, rough terrain, limited lines of communication, non-existent rail lines, and guerrilla activity. As a result, beginning in

¹³³To accomplish the Corps' objectives, the 1st Marine Division would commence an attack early on 27 November to seize Mupyong-ni, advance to the Yalu River, and destroy enemy in zone. The 7th Infantry Division would simultaneously attack north from the Chosin Reservoir, advance to the Yalu River, secure the Pungsan area, and destroy enemy in zone. The I Republic of Korea Corps would defend the Yalu River in zone, advance from the Hapsu and Chongjun areas, and destroy enemy in zone to the northern boundary of Korea. Finally, the 3d Infantry Division would protect the Corps' western flank and rear areas and destroy enemy guerrilla forces in zone in order to support the 1st Marine Division offensive. United States Army, X Corps, "Special Report on Chosin Reservoir, 27 November to 10 December 1950," 7, 10.

¹³⁴Stewart, *Staff Operations*, 2.

¹³⁵Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 387.

¹³⁶United States Army, X Corps, "War Diary (Korea) – November 16-30, 1950," Truman, RG 407, Box 26, Independence, MO.

early November, the Corps requisitioned most support directly from the 2d Logistical Command at Pusan and class II and IV supplies directly from the Japan Logistical Command. By late November, the Corps had received permission to receive all classes of supply directly from the Japan Logistical Command with the exception of tents, stoves, and winter clothing which were not available in Japan. The opening of the Hungnam port facility on 15 November relieved pressure on the Wonsan port infrastructure and the transportation net supporting the 1st Marine Division, 3d Infantry Division, and the I Republic of Korea Corps.¹³⁷

Additionally, the X Corps G-4 hosted a conference on 25 November to discuss logistical support for the new concept of operations. X Corps administrative order 8-50, promulgated that same day, provided detailed supply and transportation data to all Corps units.¹³⁸ The Corps likewise directed the maintenance and improvement of the main supply route from Hamhung to Hagaru-ri and construction of an advance command post near Hagaru-ri. It also developed a traffic regulation and control plan, requested additional rail cars and locomotives, and established a transfer point on the usable portion of the railroad that extended from Hamhung to Pohu-Jang. Additionally, the Corps developed an emergency air support plan in the event overland transportation of supplies became untenable, including the construction of a C-47 airstrip at Hagaru-ri and Koto-ri.¹³⁹ Finally, as mentioned, the Corps dedicated elements of the 3d Infantry

¹³⁷Robert A. Gimbert, "X Corps Logistics During Eighth Army Offensive of 1950" (Student Paper, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 1986), 19, 23; United States Army, Eighth Army Korea, "Monograph: Special Problems in the Korean Conflict," 42-43; Milkowski, "After Inchon," 423.

¹³⁸For example, it specified the authorized supply levels for all classes of supply at the Corps depot and division supply points. United States Army, X Corps, "Special Report on Chosin Reservoir, 27 November to 10 December 1950," 45, 48.

¹³⁹United States Army, X Corps, "Special Report on Chosin Reservoir, 27 November to 10 December 1950," 46-47, 50, 55, 62, 67.

Division to provide rear area and flank security for the Corps and to guard the port at Hungnam.¹⁴⁰

However, Almond's single-minded focus on rapid advance quickly subsumed his Corps' orderly plan and proper coordination. The Yalu River became the primary objective with units racing to see who could cover the most daily mileage.¹⁴¹ The G-3 of 7th Infantry Division described the ensuing pandemonium:

We planned an orderly concentration and movement to Chosin, by first concentrating the regiments and moving them one by one... [but] this plan was never carried out. Before we knew it, Almond ordered our closest battalions and smaller units to Chosin, individually, and as fast as they could get there.¹⁴²

As a result, the divisions operated well outside of mutual support and without the typical reserves and flank support. Because Almond did not anticipate substantial enemy resistance and urged speed above all other considerations, his plan deliberately spread Corps troops over a vast expanse of northeast Korea with minimal capability for any major unit to support another. In fact, the 1st Marine Division's objective of Mupyong-ni was fifty-five miles west of its starting location in Yudam-ni across mountainous terrain with a poor road. From Mupyong-ni, the unit would be required to advance another forty miles north to Manpojin on the Yalu River and the border. Moreover, the Corps tasked the 3d Infantry Division to secure the supply road and area south of Hagaru-ri to Hamhung when the 1st Marine Division advance commenced. However, the division occupied such diverse positions that it could barely hold the main supply route from

¹⁴⁰Gimbert, "X Corps Logistics During Eighth Army Offensive of 1950," 24-25.

¹⁴¹Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 387.

¹⁴²Stewart, *Staff Operations*, 4.

Sudong southward.¹⁴³ Thus, the Corps found itself extended along a 400-mile front when the Chinese Communist Forces initiated their counter-offensive.¹⁴⁴

Additionally, the Corps only allotted two days for the 1st Marine Division and 7th Infantry Division to position their units for the start of the attack on the morning of 27 November. The 1st Marine Division could more easily meet this timeline than the 7th Infantry Division because the Marines had already begun to consolidate around the Chosin Reservoir.¹⁴⁵ In contrast, most 7th Infantry Division units remained more than one-hundred miles away, at or near the Yalu River, while its 32nd Regiment continued in transit. The 7th Infantry Division thus struggled to simply assemble a regimental combat team and position it near the Chosin Reservoir by the morning of 27 November. The 5th Marine Regiment, in turn, could not displace to the west side of the Chosin Reservoir in preparation for its attack until replaced by a 7th Infantry Division Regiment. To meet the Corps' unrealistic timelines, the 7th Infantry Division assembled an ad hoc regimental combat team (Task Force MacLean) from troops nearest the reservoir.¹⁴⁶

However, after sunset on 27 November, three Chinese Communist Force divisions assaulted the 1st Marine Division at Yudam, Hagaru, and Sachang, and one division attacked Task Force MacLean. Two days later, on 29 November, 1st Marine Division elements west of the Chosin Reservoir were cut off at Yudam, the 3d Infantry Division battled Chinese Communist

¹⁴³Roy E. Appleman, *Escaping the Trap: The US Army X Corps in Northeast Korea, 1950* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1990), 14, 16.

¹⁴⁴United States Army, X Corps, "Special Report on Chosin Reservoir, 27 November to 10 December 1950," 101.

¹⁴⁵On 13 November, Smith selected Hagaru-ri at the lower end of the Chosin Reservoir as the division's base for future operations and began consolidating his division there.¹⁴⁵ Roy E. Appleman, *East of Chosin: Entrapment and Breakout in Korea, 1950* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1987), 8; Robert D. Heinl, *Soldiers of the Sea: The United States Marine Corps, 1775-1962*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore, MD: Nautical & Aviation Pub. Co. of America, 1991), 559.

¹⁴⁶Later referred to as the 31st Regimental Combat Team and commanded by Colonel Allan D. MacLean, the force comprised the 31st Infantry Regimental Headquarters Company, the regiment's 2nd and 3rd battalions, the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry, the 31st Tank Company, and the 57th Field Artillery Battalion with attached antiaircraft battery. Appleman, *East of Chosin*, 8-10.

Forces for control of the Yudam-Hagaru road, Task Force MacLean operated east of the Chosin Reservoir and remained dangerously exposed, and the 17th and 32d Infantry Regiments of the 7th Infantry Division continued to withdraw from the Yalu River in the Pungsan area to consolidate at the Chosin Reservoir in accordance with earlier orders. That night, the X Corps promulgated operations order 8-50 to cease offensive operations as directed by MacArthur and consolidate its far-flung forces in preparation for the withdrawal into the Hamhung-Hungnam perimeter. The next morning, on 30 November, Almond conducted an hour-long press conference during which he outlined the operational details of the last several days. He then met with his division commanders and chief of staff in the afternoon to begin planning for the implementation of the withdrawal order and the safe out loading of all troops.¹⁴⁷ The X Corps, including Roise's 2d Battalion, 5th Marines, was now decisively engaged in a fight for its survival.

The preceding analysis underscores the Corps' inconsistent performance between the success at Inchon and the withdrawal from the Chosin Reservoir. It operated effectively when it focused on planning ahead, providing administrative support, and coordinating the actions of its units. In instances where it failed to perform those functions consistently, the Corps either lost fleeting opportunities or, as in the case of culmination near the Chosin Reservoir, failed to accomplish its assigned mission.

First, in expanding the Inchon beachhead, the Corps effectively coordinated the actions of its units and thus liberated Seoul as planned. However, its failure to plan beyond Inchon generated confusion and squandered fleeting opportunities to defeat the fleeing North Korean forces. Additionally, its partially effective administrative support drained valuable resources from its divisions and distracted them from their primary mission.

¹⁴⁷Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 459, 508-509; United States Army, X Corps, "Special Report on Chosin Reservoir, 27 November to 10 December 1950," 13.

Next, despite the fact that MacArthur's plan for a second amphibious operation at Wonsan garnered widespread disapproval and criticism,¹⁴⁸ the Corps effectively planned ahead and conducted a series of conferences, visits, and inspections to ensure its readiness. However, it failed to anticipate the administrative support implications of the plan or fully consider possible contingencies. Fortunately, the Corps effectively dealt with the I Republic of Korea Corps' early capture of Wonsan and modified its plans accordingly. As a result, it successfully occupied the northeast coast of Korea with 85,000 troops in preparation for attack north to the Yalu River.

Finally, the Corps effectively modified its plan to attack north to the Yalu River based on Eighth Army's changing situation in western Korea. However, the Corps' plan ultimately ignored numerous signs of large-scale Chinese intervention in North Korea despite being fully aware of their presence, especially in vicinity of the Chosin Reservoir. While the Corps developed an effective and comprehensive administrative support plan,¹⁴⁹ it became too focused on a rapid advance to the Yalu River at the expense of proper coordination. In this case, Almond exhibited little regard for the contemporary doctrine of employing infantry divisions in a well-integrated mass.¹⁵⁰ As a result, the Corps found itself extended along a 400-mile front, with its divisions

¹⁴⁸Walker and his staff, the Commander of Naval Forces, Far East, and his staff, and the 7th Infantry Division objected vigorously to a second amphibious operation and believed that the X Corps could reach Wonsan more quickly by conducting an overland march by road from Seoul. Milkowski, "After Inchon," 421; Millett, *They Came from the North*, 281-282; Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 333.

¹⁴⁹From 25 November through 2 December, the Corps averaged 169 tons of supplies daily through the railhead at Pohu-Jang. When the Chinese Communist Forces severed the main supply route between Hamhung and Hagaru-ri on 28 November, the Corps initiated the emergency air support plan for approximately 25,000 troops. Casualty evacuations north of Hagaru-ri occurred via Marine helicopter to the C-47 airstrips under construction, where liaison aircraft then transported the patients to Hamhung for treatment at the 121st Evacuation Hospital or the hospital ship *Consolation* located in Hungnam harbor. The Corps evacuated almost 1,600 casualties by helicopter, liaison aircraft, and C-47 cargo planes. Additionally, the Corps air dropped over seventy-five tons of ammunition and supplies to isolated units. United States Army, X Corps, "Special Report on Chosin Reservoir, 27 November to 10 December 1950," 51-53.

¹⁵⁰United States War Department, *FM 100-5, Operations*, 253-277.

unable to support one another, when the Chinese Communist Forces initiated their counter-offensive. This, too, greatly contributed to the organization's culmination at the Chosin Reservoir.

COMMAND ENVIRONMENT

Along with functioning inconsistently as a corps headquarters, the X Corps' command environment reflected numerous internal and external factors that caused a lack of teamwork among higher, adjacent, and subordinate units and hindered the Corps' ability to conduct operations. Contemporary doctrine defined teamwork as the "cooperation and collaboration within and between sections of the different staff groups, between the staff and the operating units, and with the staffs of subordinate, higher and adjacent commands."¹⁵¹ It is predicated on the belief that the unit's task can be accomplished and that each team member will perform his share of the task. In fact, as the doctrine noted, success in combat demands that individuals place the unit's mission accomplishment above their own interests. The unit must therefore develop unity and cooperation among its elements and coordinate their action toward a single end.¹⁵²

Teamwork, in turn, contributes to morale which, as defined by the *Department of the Army Pamphlet No. 22-1, Leadership*, is the "mental attitude assumed toward Army life and everything associated with it by the individual man or groups of men. Good morale is indicated by a positive drive on the part of the men, a push beyond that which is expected, and an eagerness and enthusiasm, almost an intuition, concerning the leader's desires."¹⁵³ Doctrine aptly noted that units foster morale by encouraging esprit de corps and creating conditions where each individual

¹⁵¹United States Army, *Special Text No. 12, Command and Staff Functions*, 5.

¹⁵²United States War Department, *FM 21-5, Basic Field Manual, Military Training* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1941), 19; United States War Department, *FM 100-5, Operations*, 22.

¹⁵³United States Army, *Pamphlet No. 22-1, Leadership* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1948), 31.

feels like he belongs to the team, has pride in the organization, and trusts in his teammates.¹⁵⁴

Unfortunately for the X Corps, interservice rivalry, command relationships, personality differences, Almond's dual roles, political perceptions, and operating procedure differences obstructed good teamwork and degraded the Corps' ability to conduct operations between its success at Inchon and the withdrawal from the Chosin Reservoir.

First, interservice rivalry characterized the period and directly affected the X Corps' operations in Korea. The use of nuclear weapons in World War II prompted significant debate during the interwar years regarding the utility of naval power.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, from 1946-1947, the War Department General Staff strongly advocated the unification of the services. In early 1947, the chiefs of staff of the Army and Army Air Forces also promoted absorbing naval and Marine aviation into the new Air Force, reducing the Marine Corps to lightly armed battalions for ceremonial and guard duty, and relinquishing the Marines' amphibious assault mission to the Army. President Truman's overt support to the Army position exacerbated tensions and intensified the debate.¹⁵⁶

The National Security Act of 1947 ultimately prevented the transfer of naval aviation to the Air Force and protected the Marine Corps' mission and force structure.¹⁵⁷ However, subsequent efforts to trim the defense budget in accordance with President Truman's guidance kept the tensions high, as did Secretary of Defense Louis A. Johnson's belief that amphibious operations would be irrelevant and unnecessary in the future and that the Air Force could do

¹⁵⁴Ibid., 31-33.

¹⁵⁵The U.S. Navy destroyed Japan's fleet during World War II and America's emerging military threat- the Soviet Union- had no naval fleet to threaten control of the seas.¹⁵⁵ John M. Taylor, "Revolt of the Admirals," *MHQ: The Quarterly Journal of Military History* 19, no. 1 (Autumn 2006): 76-83.

¹⁵⁶Heinl, *Victory at High Tide*, 4-5.

¹⁵⁷Taylor, "Revolt of the Admirals," 76.

anything the Navy did.¹⁵⁸ By 1950, Johnson had reduced the Navy to ninety-one amphibious ships, down from a World War II high of 610, and the Marine Corps to six infantry battalions, a fraction of its World War II strength, despite the Navy and Marine Corps' disagreement with the other services' assessment that future war would be waged by heavy bombers, nuclear weapons, and a few parachutists.¹⁵⁹ Thus, at the outbreak of the Korean War, each service held vastly different professional convictions regarding defense strategy, organization, and policy, fought desperately for the resources it believed vital to conduct its mission, and entered hostilities on the Korean peninsula largely struggling for existence and still reeling from the intense debate.¹⁶⁰

Along with interservice rivalry, the Corps' status as an independent command also strained the command environment. MacArthur assigned X Corps as an independent force under his direct control without consulting the Pentagon or the Joint Chiefs of Staff. General Joseph Collins, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, did not approve of X Corps' independent status and asserted that this command relationship would only strengthen the hostility between X Corps and Eighth Army. More poignantly, he anticipated a dangerous division of American forces in Korea that would affect mission accomplishment.¹⁶¹

Collins' disapproval notwithstanding, MacArthur maintained the command relationship after Inchon for several reasons. First, he believed that a X Corps attack west from Wonsan combined with an Eighth Army attack north through the Seoul-Pyongyang corridor would outflank the North Korean defensive lines and avoid a bloody frontal assault. Additionally, the separate forces stood a better chance of trapping and destroying the estimated 25,000 to 40,000

¹⁵⁸Johnson anticipated little need for the Navy and Marine Corps and directed the Navy to prepare for approximately fifty percent reductions on aircraft carriers, carrier air groups, amphibious ships, and Marine Corps squadrons in the 1950 budget. Heinl, *Victory at High Tide*, 6-8.

¹⁵⁹Ibid.

¹⁶⁰Heinl, *Victory at High Tide*, 8-9; Taylor, "Revolt of the Admirals"; Jeffrey G. Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals: The Fight for Naval Aviation, 1945-1950* (Washington, DC: Naval Historical Center, 1994).

¹⁶¹Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 229.

troops fleeing into North Korea via the central mountain passes. MacArthur also desired to reward Almond and the X Corps for their performance during the Inchon-Seoul campaign.¹⁶² Moreover, he sought to avoid the challenges associated with integrating the two units based on the known personality differences between Almond and Walker.¹⁶³ Finally, MacArthur estimated that the early capture of Wonsan by amphibious assault would alleviate the logistical burden on Pusan. In reality, as earlier discussed, the reembarkation at Inchon and Pusan actually exacerbated logistical challenges. Eighth Army's requirement to logistically support the X Corps without tactically controlling it also slowed the advance to the Yalu River and allowed the Chinese to enter Korea in force.¹⁶⁴ More poignantly, it caused a significant degree of mutual resentment between the two commands that strained the command environment.¹⁶⁵

Additionally, Almond's aggressive personality and leadership style clashed with his division commanders and other Corps and Far East Command leaders.¹⁶⁶ Almond commanded a machinegun battalion with distinction in World War I, held desirable, career-enhancing billets during the interwar years, and commanded the 92d Infantry Division during World War II.¹⁶⁷ He assumed duties as the Far East Command G-1 in 1949, rapidly gained MacArthur's trust and confidence, and, as chief of staff, quickly became the dominant officer on the staff as well as one

¹⁶²Ibid., 229, 330-331.

¹⁶³Walker deeply resented Almond's isolation of MacArthur and believed the lower-ranking Almond treated him disrespectfully. MacArthur thus believed the two officers incapable of working with one another and wanted to avoid picking who would stay, who would go, and under what circumstances and conditions. Ibid., 36, 331.

¹⁶⁴Walker believed that integrating the X Corps into his army after Inchon would have allowed him to secure the Yalu River before the Chinese entered Korea. He also felt the Wonsan landings were unnecessary, delayed needed Eighth Army supplies for the advance north, and ultimately gave the Chinese time to enter Korea in force. United States Army, Eighth Army Korea, "Monograph: Special Problems in the Korean Conflict," 50.

¹⁶⁵Ibid., 42.

¹⁶⁶Stewart, *Staff Operations*, 11.

¹⁶⁷Millett, *They Came from the North*, 68-69.

of MacArthur's select confidants.¹⁶⁸ Almond garnered heavy admiration and criticism for his attention to detail, planning abilities, and administrative prowess. He also developed a talent for mentoring junior officers and enabling their success through important command and staff assignments. Unfortunately, throughout his career, Almond also cultivated a reputation for leading impulsively, ignoring expert advice and the chain-of-command, bullying subordinates, actively seeking errors and omissions, and behaving as a "tyrant with his staff."¹⁶⁹ He also frequently bypassed multiple layers of the chain-of-command to maneuver regiments and battalions directly. While he led from the front with courage and tenacity, at times he demonstrated extreme personal bravery to the point of recklessness.¹⁷⁰

Almond quarreled with his 1st Marine Division commander almost immediately. Major General Smith commanded the 5th Marine Regiment in World War II during the Cape Gloucester operation in early January 1944. He later served as the assistant commander of the 1st Marine Division during Peleliu and as the deputy chief of staff for the Tenth Army. Following World War II, Smith assumed duties as the commandant of Marine Corps Schools and later became the chief of staff and assistant commandant at Headquarters Marine Corps before assuming command of the 1st Marine Division. Smith departed from the typical Marine Corps warrior image and possessed a reserved, even-keeled leadership style. He commanded the respect of his Marines and peers despite the belief from some contemporaries that he looked like a college professor, was "pedantic and a bit slow," and proved inflexibly resolute when he made up his mind.¹⁷¹ Smith adamantly maintained that Almond routinely hurried the Marines at the expense of prudent

¹⁶⁸Only Brigadier General Courtney Whitney (Public Affairs Officer, Far East Command) and Charles Willoughby (G-2 Intelligence Officer, Far East Command) maintained similar relationships of trust and loyalty with MacArthur. Ibid., 68.

¹⁶⁹Ibid., 68-70.

¹⁷⁰Stewart, *Staff Operations*, 12.

¹⁷¹Simmons, *Over the Seawall*, 5.

preparations.¹⁷² Not surprisingly, Almond's bias for immediate action and Smith's prudence and caution caused the two men to constantly clash.¹⁷³

Almond and Major General Barr clashed as well but for different reasons. Barr had served in a series of senior staff jobs throughout World War II, including as chief of staff of the Sixth Army Group in the European Theater of Operations. He developed a reputation as an intelligent, capable staff officer and commanded the respect of his peers and the 7th Infantry Division staff officers. However, in Almond's opinion, Barr lacked the command presence, confidence, and forceful leadership requisite of a strong battlefield commander and the long friendship they enjoyed prior to the Korean War quickly soured. Barr, in turn, disliked Almond's intensity, dictatorial manner, and brashness to the extent that Barr requested Almond find another division commander prior to the Inchon invasion. Almond and his staff therefore viewed Barr as a liability. Moreover, after the Inchon-Seoul campaign, Almond overtly vocalized his dissatisfaction with Barr's division and fired the 31st Regimental commander. Barr and his staff thus felt heavy pressure to excel in northeast Korea and acquiesced to Almond's direct and forceful control of the division with little protest.¹⁷⁴

Of the three division commanders, Major General Soule's leadership and personality most closely resembled Almond's. Soule proved to be a feisty and aggressive commander. He held numerous assignments in the Far East throughout his career, fighting the Bolshevik Red Army in Siberia and observing the Chinese civil war between the Nationalists and Communists. Soule developed a working knowledge of the Russian language and spoke Chinese fluently. During World War II, he commanded the 188th Glider Regiment, 11th Airborne Division, and fought under MacArthur's command in the southwest Pacific, helping to recapture Manila. After

¹⁷²Stanton, *America's Tenth Legion*, 115.

¹⁷³Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 230.

¹⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 274-275, 389.

the war, Soule returned to China as a member of Chiang Kai-shek's advisor group.¹⁷⁵ Thus, at the outbreak of the Korean War, Soule likely understood China better than any American government official. He led his 3d Infantry Division from the front, routinely visited his frontline units, and encouraged his men with his forceful presence and aggressiveness. Unfortunately, he got drunk nightly and developed the bad habit of issuing incoherent orders in his impaired state. His regimental commanders learned to verify orders and guidance through the assistant division commander and chief of staff. Nonetheless, Soule's drunkenness quickly eroded Almond's special trust and confidence and thus nullified an effective working relationship.¹⁷⁶

Moreover, Almond's dual roles divided his time, efforts, and focus, garnered the X Corps favored treatment, and allowed Almond to command in MacArthur's name. Each of these effects only exacerbated existing tensions and enmity in the command environment. During the planning and early execution of the Inchon-Seoul campaign, Almond positioned himself aboard the *Mount McKinley* with MacArthur instead of on the *Buckner* with his staff and headquarters.¹⁷⁷ Thus, instead of preparing his Corps for a difficult and dangerous amphibious assault and land campaign, Almond focused on helping MacArthur convince the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the utility and feasibility of the Inchon invasion. He also served as Operation CHROMITE'S most staunch supporter within the General Headquarters Staff and worked diligently to minimize opposition.¹⁷⁸ Almond finally positioned himself at X Corps headquarters and officially assumed command of operations ashore on 21 September with the assault on Seoul well underway. Until then, he functioned more as MacArthur's chief of staff than as a field commander.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁵Dolcater, *3d Infantry Division in Korea*, 19.

¹⁷⁶Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 405-406.

¹⁷⁷Heinl, *Victory at High Tide*, 188.

¹⁷⁸Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 230.

¹⁷⁹Heinl, *Victory at High Tide*, 210, 288.

Almond's dual roles also garnered the X Corps priority support and favored treatment. He communicated regularly with the General Headquarters Staff in Tokyo using telex and telephone to ensure that his Corps got what it needed, often at the expense of Eighth Army.¹⁸⁰ For example, as earlier mentioned, the redirection of incoming Eighth Army replacements to X Corps during the build-up for Inchon produced tensions that persisted throughout operations in northeast Korea. Moreover, during embarkation at Inchon and Pusan in preparation for the Wonsan and Iwon landings, the 2d Logistical Command halted all other operations to furnish winter clothing to 40,000 X Corps troops. As a result, the Eighth Army faced delays in receiving both the cold weather gear and other logistics support necessary for continued operations.¹⁸¹ Almond's deputy chief of staff aptly summarized the effect on the command environment: "GHQ knew that if they disapproved a request, someday they might have to face Almond back in Tokyo."¹⁸²

Finally, Almond leveraged his obvious influence to command in MacArthur's name by controlling who could speak with him and regarding what agenda. MacArthur's deliberate seclusion afforded Almond significant command influence. In fact, MacArthur preferred that everything in Far East Command pass through Almond, who in turn discouraged the staff from seeing MacArthur directly. Almond's back briefs to MacArthur habitually included his own recommendations, which MacArthur often followed.¹⁸³ For example, Almond attempted to deny Admiral James H. Doyle, admiral in charge of the amphibious landing, the ability to brief MacArthur on the risks at Inchon asserting that MacArthur had no interest in the details. Almond

¹⁸⁰Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 229, 572; Stewart, *Staff Operations*, 1.

¹⁸¹United States Army, Eighth Army Korea, "Monograph: Special Problems in the Korean Conflict," 30, 40.

¹⁸²Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 572.

¹⁸³Millett, *They Came from the North*, 68; Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 33.

similarly excluded Shepherd and Smith from the same meeting because he knew both Marines opposed the current plans for Inchon.¹⁸⁴

In addition to Almond's dual roles, the perception that politics drove planning and decision-making at the Corps headquarters likewise affected the command environment.¹⁸⁵ For example, historian Edwin Hoyt asserts that Almond ordered the 1st Marine Division to execute a daring night attack on 25 September in an effort to meet the 90-day political anniversary of the North Korean seizure of Seoul as opposed to exploit a fleeting tactical opportunity.¹⁸⁶ An attack before midnight on 25 September, based on unconfirmed reports the enemy was fleeing the city, would allow Almond to report to MacArthur that Seoul had been liberated within 90 days. Smith, both during the battle and in later reflection, did not understand why Almond so urgently pressed an attack at night when it was difficult to verify who was moving north of the city at night and in what capacity.¹⁸⁷ In fact, Smith later wrote that Almond became so fixated on liberating Seoul by the anniversary date that he "lost touch with reality."¹⁸⁸ To compound the confusion and tension, MacArthur released a statement highlighting X Corps' recapture of Seoul by 1400 on 25 September despite the fact that operations to secure Seoul continued for three more days.¹⁸⁹

In another example, Almond blindly followed MacArthur's guidance to advance north to the Yalu River at all haste because he believed that MacArthur "could do no wrong"¹⁹⁰ and his loyalty and overarching desire to please MacArthur transcended prudent planning.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁴Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 230.

¹⁸⁵Heinl, *Victory at High Tide*, 212.

¹⁸⁶Hoyt, *On to the Yalu*, 147-153.

¹⁸⁷Ibid.

¹⁸⁸Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 274.

¹⁸⁹Hoyt, *On to the Yalu*, 147-153.

¹⁹⁰Stewart, *Staff Operations*, 2; Appleman, *Escaping the Trap*, 47.

¹⁹¹"Commenting on Almond's ready acquiescence to MacArthur's orders in this phase of the Korean War, Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway wrote: 'One must keep in mind Almond's relation to MacArthur,

Additionally, Barr and most senior officers in the 7th Infantry Division wanted to make it to the Yalu River to outperform the Eighth Army, who they viewed as their primary competition. For the 7th Infantry Division, making it to the Yalu River would likewise outdo the 1st Marine Division whose dominant publicity overshadowed the 7th Infantry Division's achievements in the Inchon-Seoul campaign.¹⁹²

Finally, each service commenced operations in Korea with operating procedure differences that further aggravated the command environment tensions. During initial planning, Army planners hoped to achieve complete surprise and therefore initially wanted little or no air or naval gunfire support. However, Navy and Marine Corps planners argued for three to four days of pre-landing air and naval bombardment to neutralize the shore batteries and eventually developed a fire support plan in accordance with their doctrine.¹⁹³ Almond and his staff also proposed three plans for the Inchon-Seoul campaign that Smith and his staff rejected due to different views on planning, rehearsals, unity of effort, mass, and use of fire support.¹⁹⁴

Along those same lines, Almond and Smith disagreed on the most effective methodology to secure Seoul. Almond assessed that the mission required more troops¹⁹⁵ and believed that

whose Chief of Staff he still was, on paper; MacArthur's brilliance of concept and perseverance in carrying through his plan of wide envelopment at Inchon, deserving of the highest praise; and his world-wide fame, which made it extremely difficult for a subordinate to question his judgment. Recognition of these facts would indicate that only if MacArthur's decisions were, in Almond's judgment, likely to sacrifice his Corps, would he have felt justified in openly protesting." Appleman, *East of Chosin*, 11.

¹⁹²Blair, *The Forgotten War*, 416.

¹⁹³Simmons, *Over the Seawall*, 14; Heinl, *Victory at High Tide*, 57.

¹⁹⁴The first envisioned a daring seizure of the Kimpo Airfield by the 8227th Army Unit reinforced with one hundred Marines. Smith objected since the 5th Marine Regiment had just recently withdrawn from combat in the Pusan, where it took casualties, and the 1st Marine Division simply needed to retain its experienced troops. The second related plan landed the Raider Company (without Marines) at Kunsan, one hundred miles south of Inchon, to create a diversion in an area where three North Korean divisions operated. The third proposal involved landing a battalion of the 32d Infantry Regiment on Wolmi-Do island during the Inchon landings and using Marine Corps trucks and tanks to advance twenty miles inland to seize the high ground south of Seoul. Smith rejected this idea too because it was tactically flawed and diverted resources from the landing. Rottman, *Inchon 1950*, 49; Heinl, *Victory at High Tide*, 72-73.

¹⁹⁵Millett, *They Came from the North*, 252, 255.

ordering the Marine regiments to attack toward each other through Seoul would hasten the Corps' victory.¹⁹⁶ However, with the Inchon beachhead established, Smith and his staff believed that prudent planning and reconnaissance should precede any actions to liberate Seoul, and that the Marine regiments should attack side-by-side through Seoul to support one another.¹⁹⁷ Smith likewise grew increasingly concerned with coordinating the fire and movement of additional units in an already-constricted city and surrounding terrain. He also wanted to conduct detailed rehearsals in preparation for the attack but lacked sufficient time to do so.¹⁹⁸

Smith similarly resisted Almond's rapid attack north to the Yalu River with separate battalion and regimental combat groups "without first building up bases of supply along the MSR [main supply route] from Hamhung and Hungnam and concentrating his division units within supporting distances of each other."¹⁹⁹ In fact, Smith became so concerned over the fragmentation and dispersion of the X Corps units that he wrote a personal letter to the Commandant of the Marine Corps to express his concerns regarding the race to the Yalu River.²⁰⁰

As emphasized throughout this section, the X Corps' command environment engendered a lack of teamwork that further degraded its ability to conduct operations. The prevalent interservice rivalries permeated every aspect of the Defense Department's interwar posture, mobilization, and preparations for the Korean War and undoubtedly impacted the conduct of combat operations throughout 1950. American forces entered the Korean War deeply distrusting

¹⁹⁶Heinl, *Victory at High Tide*, 211, 213; Rottman, *Inchon 1950*, 81.

¹⁹⁷Millett, *They Came from the North*, 252; Heinl, *Victory at High Tide*, 211, 213; Rottman, *Inchon 1950*, 81.

¹⁹⁸From Guadalcanal onward during World War II, the 1st Marine Division would have likely spent three months planning, training, and rehearsing for an operation of this magnitude to ensure familiarity with the plan. Simmons, *Over the Seawall*, 24.

¹⁹⁹Appleman, *Escaping the Trap*, 49.

²⁰⁰Smith realized that over eighty miles separated his exposed left flank from the nearest Eighth Army troops, he had obvious evidence of Chinese presence in strength, and the harsh Korean winter rapidly approached. Heinl, *Soldiers of the Sea*, 559.

one another and highly skeptical of the defense department. This distrust transcended simple disagreements or petty bickering- the services possessed vastly different ideas on their roles and responsibilities in the post-World War II defense strategy and commenced operations in Korea fighting for resources and relevance.

The X Corps' status as an independent command and Almond's dual roles further disrupted unity of effort throughout Far East Command. Historian Robert D. Heinl asserts that MacArthur erred gravely in allowing Almond to serve simultaneously as chief of staff and corps commander.²⁰¹ Additionally, the assignment of incoming units from Eighth Army to X Corps not only affected the organizational structure and operations process, it likewise strained the relationship between those two units to the extent that it factored heavily into MacArthur's command relationship decisions following the liberation of Seoul.

Finally, the stark personality, leadership, and operating procedure differences between Almond and his divisions heavily influenced operational effectiveness. The lack of available preparation time made it especially difficult to overcome these challenges. Almond's leadership style exacerbated tensions to the point of ineffectiveness, and the personalities of his division commanders did little to improve the command environment. Additionally, while Almond's aggressiveness sometimes benefited his organization, it also contributed to the Corps' culmination in vicinity of the Chosin Reservoir and kept his staff in a "permanent state of crisis management."²⁰² The command environment thus undoubtedly affected the Corps' ability to conduct operations between the success at Inchon and the withdrawal from the Chosin Reservoir.

²⁰¹Heinl, *Victory at High Tide*, 261.

²⁰²Stewart, *Staff Operations*, 12.

CONCLUSION

General MacArthur levied great expectations on the fledgling X Corps as it commenced the Inchon invasion in September 1950. To its credit, the Corps overcame significant early challenges to meet those expectations in a bold amphibious operation. Less than three months later and under dire circumstances, the combat-hardened Corps once again met great expectations by narrowly escaping complete destruction at the hands of twelve Chinese Communist divisions as it withdrew from northeast Korea.

Why, though, was the X Corps forced to withdraw from the Chosin Reservoir? No single consideration fully explains the Corps' fate in northeast Korea in late 1950. Instead, as discussed throughout this monograph, the X Corps lacked sufficient time to build cohesive teams, neglected to function consistently, and proved unable to engender a command environment that fostered teamwork. Together, these factors help explain the Corps' ability to expand the Inchon beachhead to secure Seoul, prepare for offensive actions in northeast Korea, and attack to the Yalu River.

The X Corps entered the Korean War with an ad hoc headquarters and partially formed and trained Army, Marine Corps, and Republic of Korea units. Each of these critical components of the X Corps mobilized for war at varying levels of personnel and training readiness and overcame significant obstacles to form rapidly for combat operations. Ultimately, however, the X Corps lacked adequate time to build cohesive teams before commencing operations. These manning and training shortfalls were not unique to the X Corps. Instead, the Corps' challenges reflected the overarching political and strategic environment in which it operated. The extensive demobilization following World War II, significant budgetary constraints, and America's assessment of potential threats drove planning assumptions about the character of future warfare. Planning assumptions, in turn, directly informed manning, equipping, and training efforts and resulted in a force largely unprepared for combat operations on the Korean peninsula in 1950.

Moreover, as evidenced in three distinct phases of operations, the Corps achieved successful results when it planned ahead, provided administrative support, and coordinated the actions of its units using established doctrine. The X Corps commenced operations in Korea with an offense-focused doctrine forged in World War II that espoused coordination and long-term planning to capitalize on successes and exploit fleeting opportunities. This doctrine likewise urged operational commanders to avoid tactical micromanagement and provide subordinate commanders the flexibility to maneuver their formations appropriately to meet corps objectives. Equally important, it outlined the administration necessary to support operations. Thus, as previously highlighted, the Corps had sound doctrine in northeast Korea in 1950 but failed to apply it consistently due to inexperience and training deficiencies.²⁰³

Additionally, the command environment reflected numerous internal and external factors that caused a lack of teamwork and hindered the Corps' ability to conduct operations. Interservice rivalries caused each service to commence operations in Korea fighting for resources and relevance. These factors distinctly impacted the X Corps and Eighth Army as adjacent operational commands on the Korean peninsula. Command relationships within the Far East Command further disrupted unity of effort, and operating procedure, leadership, and personality differences exacerbated these existing tensions to the point of ineffectiveness.

The X Corps' experience throughout 1950 offers several valuable lessons to modern campaigns and operational planners. First, as noted by historian Robert D. Heinl, "immediately ready, professional expeditionary forces exert an influence out of all proportion to their size at the outset of any war, large or small, near or remote."²⁰⁴ As in the years leading up to the Korean

²⁰³United States Army, Eighth Army Korea, "Monograph: Special Problems in the Korea Conflict," 63; United States Army, Eighth Army Korea, "Logistics Study of the Korean Campaigns, 1950-1953," 11.

²⁰⁴Heinl, *Soldiers of the Sea*, 588.

War, today's environment of postwar drawdowns and dwindling resources fuels the debate on service roles and responsibilities. This discourse, and the important decisions it precipitates, will likely alter the availability of forces, challenge the expeditionary readiness of the United States, and make the maintenance of combat-ready forces increasingly difficult. As a result, planners and commanders must constantly assess their troop levels, available intelligence, and logistics support plans to ensure they are able to accomplish their assigned missions.²⁰⁵

Additionally, the Army's current operating concept relies on modular brigade combat teams that are relatively self-sustaining and capable of independent operations to perform many of the same functions as World War II and Korean War era divisions. Modern divisions must therefore possess the capability to conduct large unit operations requisite of World War II and Korean War era corps. To that end, commanders and staffs must understand how modern doctrine, including mission command, informs large unit operations, and should train their headquarters to apply it as necessary in support of future contingency operations.²⁰⁶

Along with reinforcing the importance of knowing and using established doctrine, the X Corps' experience in late 1950 likewise highlights the utility of standard operating procedures. The X Corps published standard operating procedures in July 1951, after its withdrawal from northeast Korea, to "reduce to routine the normal operations of divisions and corps troops in this

²⁰⁵In its own critical analysis of operations in Korea from 1950-1953, the Eighth Army identified this shortfall and recommended that theater planners maintain standing plans to help them prepare for the early phases of future contingency operations. United States Army, Eighth Army Korea, "Logistics Study of the Korean Campaigns, 1950-1953," 13-15.

²⁰⁶*FM 3-92, Corps Operations*, provides specific information on large unit operations and notes that the corps remains the operational headquarters for decisive land combat, translates strategic guidance into tactical tasks, and serves an essential role as a joint or multinational headquarters. United States Army, *FM 3-92, Corps Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010), Foreword. See United States Army, *ADP 6-0, Mission Command* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), ii, iv, for more information on the U.S. Army's concept of mission command as both a warfighting philosophy and warfighting function.

command.”²⁰⁷ These procedures tailored published doctrine to the specific X Corps situation in Korea at that time and addressed many of the challenges it faced in late 1950 including operations, fire support, intelligence, administration, and staff actions. It likewise standardized required reports and submission timelines to synchronize the efforts of commanders and staffs.²⁰⁸ Modern commanders and staffs at any echelon should heed this example.

In closing, historian Stanlis D. Milkowski summarizes the utility of examining the lessons of Korea in 1950:

What gave the Korean War its unique character was that it was fought at the margin of U.S. strategy, beyond the line that demarcated America’s vital interests. It was also fought on the margin in the sense that resources were limited- borrowed from strategic missions elsewhere. In a dangerous world, future crises may overtake us in the same way, at places where map sheets end and where there is no contingency planning worthy of the name. Against that day, operational planners might do worse than to consider the lessons of 1950.²⁰⁹

Indeed, commanders and staffs who ignore these lessons do so at their peril.

²⁰⁷United States Army, X Corps, “Standard Operating Procedures, 1 Jul 1951,” USAMHI, X Corps Collection, Carlisle Barracks, PA, Cover Letter.

²⁰⁸Part I described operations and training procedures for assigned and attached units. It provided detailed guidance and expectations by functional area to facilitate shared understanding and unity of effort. Parts II discussed the operations of the corps headquarters company in the field including composition of elements, preparations and movements by motor and rail, and selection, arrangement, and security of the command post. Part III articulated the corps staff procedures including delineation of responsibilities, the collaboration and dissemination of information, policies for visiting troops and for receiving visitors to the headquarters, and the criteria for notifying the commanding general and chief of staff on corps happenings. Ibid.; United States Army, Eighth Army Korea, “Logistics Study of Korean Campaigns, 1950-1953,” 15.

²⁰⁹Milkowski, “After Inchon,” 432.

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